

Counts! program as a way to develop character based on the six core ethical values.

The Albuquerque Public Schools will continue collaborations with community entities to reach agreements about the role of each in promoting ethical behavior among young people and adults in various aspects of life.

The Albuquerque Public Schools commit to creating models of ethical behavior among all adults who serve students and schools.

The APS Core Curriculum will continue to give explicit attention to character development as an ongoing part of school instruction. Materials, teaching methods, partnerships, and services for school programs shall be selected by APS, in part, for their capacity to support the development of character among youth and adults.

The Albuquerque Public Schools will provide training to enable schools and other administrative units to implement the principles of character education.

All schools will examine school curriculum, classroom practices, and extra curricular activities to identify and extend opportunities for developing character.

APS School to Work initiatives will integrate character education with the employability skills necessary to prepare students to enter the workplace.

The emphasis on character education in the public schools has been met with immediate and enthusiastic support in the business and volunteer community in Albuquerque. Members of the Leadership Council formed to support Character Counts! include representatives from financial institutions, non-profit youth agencies, Sandia National Laboratory, the NAACP, the NM Bar Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, the City of Albuquerque, the Albuquerque Teachers Federation, and others. This coalition was formed to support the Character Counts initiative financially, and by giving parents in the work force the same message given to their children in schools. The marketing committee from this council planned and implemented a Character Counts rally in Albuquerque's Civic Plaza. Character Counts day at the New Mexico State Fair, and numerous other events to support the program. Citizens of Albuquerque read the Character Counts message on billboards, on soft drink cans, and in city utility bills.

As schools begin conversations based on character education, they enjoy the freedom to plan learning activities tailored for their own students, staff, and communities. District support for these ventures in the first year included a training session given by Michael Josephson, founder of Character Counts, for representatives of each geographical cluster of schools. There teachers, parents, and administrators will act as trainers and facilitators for the rest of the school district and community. Other support activities included the development of a bibliography for Character Counts based on the six pillars, a parent manual for use in schools, and a manual for administrators interested in initiating a program in their own schools.

Second year support activities include the distribution of a commitment form for schools to indicate their plans for character education to district administrators, followed by a starter kit to be distributed to interested teachers and students. Other administrative units in the public schools have developed their own plans for character education, including a program for school bus behavior and safety. Join-A-School business partnerships in 1995-96 will focus on respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness as demonstrated in school-to-work training.

Much of the growth in the second year of Character Counts involvement will be sup-

ported by a grant through the New Mexico State Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education. The New Mexico Character Education Pilot Project will allow the school district to continue its formal plans to provide extended training in character education, further develop a marketing component, involve parents and community members as active partners in character education, mentor a Native American school/community in character education, and develop a clearinghouse for information related to character education.

The true joy in the growing involvement of APS schools in character education is found not in administrative structure and planning, but in the classrooms and school programs developed to support Character Counts. Examples of student participation include school Character Counts kickoffs like the one at Cochiti Elementary School where staff and students celebrated the word of the month with original songs, raps, and poetry, all focused on "Respect." At this school, student-authored slogans are announced daily and posted in the cafeteria to remind everyone to be respectful to self and to others. At Sombra del Monte Elementary School, teachers and parents performed skits demonstrating "respect" to the delight of their students. Students at Chelwood launched their program as they released balloons, each representing a pillar of Character Counts. The students attached cards to the balloons, asking the finder to return the card to the school. Children at Wherry Elementary School sang a rap they composed about character and children performed examples of "do's" and "don'ts" of good character at an all school assembly. Middle school activities include rewarding students at Madison Middle School for demonstrating behavior related to the six pillars by presenting coupons good for redemption at local businesses, and holding a Jog-A-Thon to kickoff activities at Grant Middle School. McKinley Middle School hosted a breakfast for its school bus drivers to begin their pilot project integrating school bus safety and the concepts of Character Counts. Eldorado High School students are reminded of Character Counts with the printing of the six pillars above all school doorways.

While APS is presently caught up in the launching of the Character Counts! philosophy, members of the district know that the true test of the value of this initiative will lie far down the road for our young students. The participants in Character Counts in the Albuquerque Public Schools believe the true value in this program will be measured in succeeding years, when student learning and behavior reflects not only the enthusiasm of launching a worthwhile program, but demonstrates the internalization of the six pillars of Character Counts.●

ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

● Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to speak on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

In their budget reconciliation package, Republican budget planners have mandated the oil exploration and drilling of the fragile coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This 125-mile stretch is the last protected area of the 1,100-mile Alaskan coastline. It is home to many precious species including caribou, polar bears, golden eagles, and grizzly bears.

We have all seen the devastation wreaked by the drilling of the North Slope of Alaska and Prudhoe Bay. Be-

fore oil was discovered in the North Slope, it was part of the largest intact wilderness in the United States. The oil development of the North Slope has resulted in hundreds of open waste pits containing millions of gallons of oil industry waste and the destruction of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat. There is no reason to believe that the drilling of the coastal plain would produce any less devastating effects. The damage caused by the construction of oil rigs, roads, and pipelines and the inevitable oil and chemical spills are simply not worth the assumed revenues of this short term private gain induced pillaging.

As stewards of our few remaining wildlife refuges, I believe that we have an obligation to protect them and the animals that seek shelter within them.

Mr. President, I also ask that an editorial by Jessica Mathews, which appeared in the Washington Post on October 23, 1995, be printed in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From the Washington Post, Oct. 23, 1995]

LUSTING AFTER BLACK GOLD

(By Jessica Mathews)

Alaskans think they have a terrible financial problem. To solve it they propose to ruin the last protected fragment of the arctic coastal plain—part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)—by opening it to oil drilling.

Here's the problem. Alaska has no state income tax, no sales tax and the lowest fuel taxes in the nation. It has the highest per-capita income from the federal government of any state. State spending is twice the national average. And it has an \$18 billion savings account, the Permanent Fund, that provides an annual Christmas-in-September check of a little less than \$1,000 for every man, woman and child. You might think of it as Saudi Alaska.

Here's the bad news. The North Slope oil revenues that underwrite this easy living are drying up, and the state now has a half-billion-dollar deficit that's heading skyward.

One can still think offhand of about 49 governors who would love to have a fiscal problem like Alaska's. Solutions leap to the mind. Impose a small sales tax. Raise the fuel tax a bit. Cut the most egregious spending frills. Use some of the income from the oil-funded savings account for the purpose for which it was created instead of as a universal bonus entitlement. Alaskans have a different answer. Drill ANWR—and hope that puts off the day of reckoning for a few more years.

In an unguarded moment of honesty, Alaska's congressional delegation—Sens. Ted Stevens (R) and Frank Murkowski (R) and Rep. Don Young (R)—made the linkage explicit in a recent letter to constituents. The relevant passage says, in full: "Oil revenue funds about 85 percent of the state's budget, but Prudhoe Bay is in decline. The administration is threatening to veto legislation to open the coastal plain."

The other arguments for drilling in the refuge range from flimsy to specious. For years, a favorite has been that it would enhance national security by reducing the country's oil import dependence. That won't wash anymore since Congress and the administration have agreed to lift the 22-year-old ban on exporting Alaskan oil. If we need to reduce oil imports, why export our own?

The best came Presidents Reagan and Bush could make for opening ANWR was that

chances were one in two that its production would rise in a few years to 4 percent of U.S. oil use, dropping to one percent five years later and less thereafter. Not surprisingly, Congress didn't find that a compelling reason to make an irreversible sacrifice of the wilderness. If in some presently unimaginable future the nation absolutely required ANWR's oil it would still be there for the taking.

Since then, the U.S. Geological Survey has slashed the expected find by more than half. An offshore well drilled in one of the most promising areas was a bust. Another hit oil but not in developable quantity, though the company, Atlantic Richfield, is still enthusiastic.

Meanwhile, the expected market in which ANWR oil would have to compete, has turned from tight to squishy. Projected oil prices for the year 2000 are down from \$38 to \$19 per barrel. That turns the industry's five-year-old projection, which it is now shamelessly recycling, of 700,000 jobs created nationwide, from highly unlikely to laughable.

The last-resort claim is that drilling won't make much difference to this narrow plain that is the biologically crucial part—the birthing, denning, feeding and nursery ground—of a much larger, fragile and unique arctic ecosystem. But no matter how environmentally sensitive the effort, 400 miles of roads, 11 production facilities, four airstrips, two ports, massive gravel mining and housing for several thousand, plus associated emissions and toxic wastes are not what most people expect of wilderness. Neither will the plants and animals.

What's left? A short-term fix that might or might not prolong the oil-welfare state. Not much there to arouse support, even in Washington. So the state's powerful congressional delegation, whose members chair both the House and Senate Natural Resources Committees, came up with a sweetener. They propose to give half of the hoped-for leasing revenue to Washington, which helps make the numbers work in the Republicans' deficit-reduction plan. If Congress counts on the money, however, it is playing a chump's game. The state has promised to sue for any split less than the 90 percent it believes is guaranteed by its Statehood Act.

Alaska's congressmen want the name of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge changed to the Arctic Oil Reserve. It's revealing that what's gone is not just wildlife, but the national interest as well. Until Congress acts, they unilaterally have adopted a new acronym, AOR. If the ANWR proposal does pass, the delegation has a lot more to follow, including develop in the Tongass National Forest and turning back 70 million acres of federal lands to the state.

Instead, Congress should give the ANWR proposal the treatment it deserves. In the spirit of adopting new acronyms it could send along a message as well: GRA. Get Real, Alaska. The rest of us would trade for your troubles. Face the real choices now—ANWR isn't the answer.●

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MENTALLY DISABLED VETERANS

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, on September 26, during the Senate debate on H.R. 2099, the VA-HUD appropriations bill, I offered an amendment to strike a provision in the bill which would discontinue disability compensation payments to certain mentally disabled veterans when their savings reach \$25,000. Unfortunately, my amendment was not adopted. I continue to believe strongly that this provision should be enacted and urged the conferees on H.R. 2099 to drop it.

vision should not be enacted and urged the conferees on H.R. 2099 to drop it.

Mr. President, as I noted in that debate, this provision discriminates against a small group of veterans: those who are mentally disabled. It does terrible harm to these veterans. One proponent of the provision expressed the view that the provision does not affect the standard of living or the condition of any veteran. I disagree.

Mr. President, let me describe the situation of a veteran who called my office to explain how this provision affects her. She is from New Mexico. She receives VA compensation for a mental disorder that resulted from her military service. At times over the years, her disability has been particularly bad and she has been rated incompetent by VA. Right now, she is doing better and is not rated incompetent. However, she never knows when things will turn bad again and she will again be at risk of being rated incompetent.

Because of this risk, she told committee staff that, if this provision is enacted, she will not go to the VA hospital for treatment because she is afraid they will determine her condition is worse and they will recommend she be rated incompetent. If that happened, she would lose her compensation. Then she would lose her house because she could not make the mortgage payments. That is what she said. So, she will not seek treatment.

Mr. President, I understood that this bill would take away disability compensation from incompetent veterans whose estates exceed \$25,000, and I have opposed it as rank discrimination against a small group of veterans who are unable to protect themselves. Until this veteran called, however, I had not focused on how this provision would inhibit the very people we are trying to help from seeking medical treatment. I am convinced that this woman's condition will be affected by this provision. She is so afraid of this provision she will not seek the help she needs—help she has earned—help she is entitled to. That is what this provision does to mentally disabled veterans. That is why it should be dropped in the conference report.●

VETERANS HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY REFORM ACT OF 1995

● Mr. WELLSTONE. Mr. President, I understand that the House Budget Reconciliation bill incorporates the provisions of the "Veterans Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1995," a draft bill which addresses some of the critical problems faced both by veterans seeking health care and by the VA in providing health care services. I applaud the sponsors of the bill for their efforts to help the VA fulfill its lofty purpose: to take care of those who have served their country with pride and honor.

The House bill would enable the VA to provide its services more efficiently

and in the most appropriate setting, assuring our Nation's veterans that they could receive the care they need. Specifically, it would ensure that VA health care providers are granted the freedom to treat veterans on an outpatient basis when appropriate and would broaden the VA's authority to contract for outpatient services. In other words, the VA at long last could pursue methods of treatment based on medical and economic common sense, benefiting veterans and providers alike.

Let me highlight some of the key provisions of this innovative legislation which is of major importance to America's veterans. It would:

Enable VA, within appropriations, to provide all needed hospital care and medical services to eligible veterans, including preventive and home health care;

Call for VA to manage the provision of care and services through enrollment or registration, based on a system of priorities;

Assign priority for enrollment in the following order: First, veterans 30 percent or more service-connected disabled, second, former POW's and veterans with service-connected disabilities rated 10 or 20 percent, third, veterans receiving aid and attendance or housebound benefits and otherwise eligible veterans who suffer from a catastrophic disability, fourth, veterans unable to defray the cost of medical services, and fifth, all others;

Give VA discretion to determine how an enrollment system would operate and authority to set additional priorities within the above priority groups; and

Protect specialized VA programs, such as those for veterans with spinal cord injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Mr. President, I want to stress that this legislation not only enjoys broad bipartisan support in the House, but that it is very much in the spirit of the Senate Appropriations Committee report issued last month on the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill under the aegis of my distinguished colleagues Senators BOND and MIKULSKI.

This report noted the committee had included a provision "enabling VA to treat veterans eligible for hospital care or medical service in the most efficient manner," adding that the Committee supported the VA's efforts "to shift as much of its inpatient workload to ambulatory care settings as possible, to make better use of its resources." This is precisely what the House bill seeks to accomplish.

I also want to underscore that this legislation has won widespread support from numerous veterans service organizations [VSO's], experts on veterans health care, and the VA.

There have, however, been widely differing estimates from the VA and CBO on how the bill will affect demand for VA services and what impact if any it